

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Steve Stern

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LEGISLATOR STEVE STERN JOINS WITH COUNTY OFFICIALS AND ORGAN DONATION ADVOCATES TO DECLARE APRIL “DONATE LIFE-ORGAN DONATION AWARENESS MONTH”

Hours Later, Christian Siems receives Donor Heart



l-r: Michele Martines, Legislator Steve Stern, Dr. Alan Gass, Jennifer Lentini & Christian Siems

HUNTINGTON, NY – Suffolk County Legislator Steve Stern (D-Huntington) held a press conference with County officials and organ donation advocates to announce that his legislation declaring April “Donate Life-Organ Donation Awareness Month” passed unanimously at the March 24th General Session of the Legislature.

Legislator Stern was joined by Christian Siems, a 21-year-old Suffolk County resident who was awaiting a heart transplant. Christian wore a Left Ventricular Assist Device (LVAD) to support his heart while he awaited a life-saving transplant. **Just 12 hours later**, Christian received the call that he and his family have been waiting for - a donor heart became available and the next day. On Saturday, Christian underwent a life-saving heart transplant,

thanks to a selfless donor and donor family, who made the courageous decision to donate life, even in their time of unspeakable grief.

“We are so grateful that this day, which we have been waiting for more than 6 months has arrived and that Christian will have the opportunity to begin a new life with a new heart,” Michele Martines, Christian’s mother said. “In our joy, there is sadness for the donor’s family. We are blessed with his selfless act of kindness by being a donor. No words can express our gratitude.”

Jennifer Lentini, who received a heart transplant at 13 years old in 1996, also spoke. Jennifer recently met the mother of her donor, who died at the age of 14. His mother was able to hear her son Matthew’s heart beating inside Jennifer, affirming the life-sustaining value of organ donation. “Organ donation is the greatest gift you can give someone, the gift of life,” Lentini said. “I am a living, breathing testament of that. Thank you, Matthew for the gift of life. Heart Transplant Recipient 7/6/96.”

“Organ donation truly is the ‘Gift of Life,’ Legislator Stern said. “Just hours after helping to raise awareness of the critical need for people to become organ donors, Christian received the greatest gift of all - the gift of life. I strongly encourage all residents who are eligible to register as organ donors and help make miracles happen.”

To register as an organ donor, please visit: <http://www.donatelifeny.org/take-action/register-to-become-a-donor/>

You can sign up with the department of motor vehicles and when you register to vote.

<http://dmv.ny.gov/more-info/register-become-organ-eye-or-tissue-donor>

<http://www.donatelifeny.org/take-action/how-to-sign-up-when-you-register-to-vote/>

You can also indicate your desire to be an organ donor in your health care proxy.

<https://www.health.ny.gov/forms/doh-1430.pdf>